

out of above a dozen, the remainder of which have been long since distributed, which do not correspond with the ordinary Algerian or British specimens, and which are decidedly larger than *Ph. trochilus*. They correspond in all proportions and specific characters, except that the second primary is relatively shorter than in *P. trochilus*, and is only barely the length of the sixth, which it always exceeds in the common species. This is evidently the bird mistaken by Temminck (Man. d'Orn. iii. p. 150) for the *Sylvia icterina* of Vieillot, a bird with a depressed bill, belonging to the *Hippolais* group. This bird, besides its larger size, has proportionally a much stronger and larger bill than the willow-wren. As Temminck's name cannot stand, I propose to designate it

*Phyllopeuste major*.

Long. tot. 5·3, al. 2·7, caud. 2·3, tarsi ·75, rostr. a rict. ·5.

*Hab.* Southern Mediterranean coasts.

I am still prepared to acquiesce in its rejection, but think it well to notice it, as being undoubtedly the bird intended by Temminck when he described *S. icterina*.

III.—Notes on New-Zealand Eared Seals.

By DR. HECTOR, F.R.S.&c.

ON the 13th of February last, during the visit of H.M.S. 'Clio' to Milford Sound, on the west coast of the South Island of New Zealand, three seals were shot by H.E. Sir George Bowen, which proved to be the Eared Seal or Fur-Seal of New Zealand, as it is termed by the traders\*. They were shot from a boat while basking on ledges of rock; and although several others were mortally wounded, their great activity enabled them to scramble into deep water, so that only three were secured. I took the following measurements of the two largest, which were male and female adults. Both had the same form, colour, and general appearance, the male being the largest in every respect except the length of the hind flippers and tail, which were of slightly greater proportional dimensions in the female. The male weighed 258 lbs., and the female 208 lbs.

In both the snout was obliquely truncate, the upper surface being prolonged so as to overhang the mouth. Nostrils vertical elongated slits; nose jet-black; a few stout bristles on

\* Only previously known as *Phoca ursina* of J. R. Forster, who gives a figure and account of it in Cook's 'Voyage,' and Buffon's 'Histoire Naturelle.'—J. E. GRAY.

the snout, which is short and not separated from the head; head round; the eyes lateral; ears with slender, pointed tubular conch. Colour uniform black when wet, but when dry rusty in the male and grizzled in the female; scattered hairs rising from the fur; fur close, dense, and about half an inch deep; tips of the fur bluish, middle parts chestnut-brown, and pure white at base.

Flippers marked with a few chaffy scales; the anterior flippers with small nails immersed on the first four digits, and only a faint mark on the fifth. Posterior flippers with strong nails immersed on the three central digits, the first and fifth being feeble.

*Table of Measurements, in inches.*

	Male.	Female.
Total length .....	82	80
Nose to ear .....	9	8·5
„ angle of mouth .....	8	7·8
„ eye .....	4·5	4·5
Length of ear .....	1·8	1·7
Width of nose .....	1·7	1·7
Anterior flipper, length of exterior surface from shoulder-joint . . .	31	29
Ditto, length of interior surface from axilla .....	17	16
Posterior flipper, length from hip-joint .....	15	16
Length of tail .....	4	4

Incisor teeth  $\frac{6}{4}$ , those external in the upper jaw resembling the canines in form and size; the others small, and feebly implanted in the jaw; canines very strong, and locking, 1·7 inch long; molars simple, conical, compressed.

One day the chase of five of these seals with the steam-pinnace in the still waters of the sound afforded a most exciting and novel kind of sport. The seals, startled by the snorting of the little high-pressure engine, instead of taking their usual dignified plunge out of sight, went off at full speed, diving and reappearing in order to get a glimpse of the unnatural monster that pursued them so closely. The utmost speed we could make barely kept up with them, until they began to show signs of distress, and one by one doubled and dived under the boat. Two of them, however, held out for a run of three miles, and succeeded at last in getting into safety among the rocks on the opposite shore. As all the ammunition had been previously expended by the party, except some

small shot, the chase was productive of nothing more substantial than excitement. From the experience gained from the race, the pace at which the seals go through the water may be considered between six and seven miles an hour.

Colonial Museum, Wellington.  
April 3, 1871.

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IV.—*On the Agamic Reproduction of a Species of Chironomus, and its Development from the Unfecundated Egg.*  
By OSCAR VON GRIMM\*.

[Plate III.]

*Introduction.*

“Nature goes on her way, and what seems to us an exception is according to rule.”—GOETHE.

ALTHOUGH the parthenogenesis, that is to say the agamic reproduction, of many insects (such as the worker bees, humble bees, wasps, ants, Coccidæ, &c.) had long been known, people were disinclined to put any faith in the discovery of Prof. N. Wagner, of Kasan, that the larva of a Cecidomyid propagates asexually. For fully two years Wagner's discovery had to submit to unmerited mistrust, although it had been crowned with the Demidow prize by the St. Petersburg Academy of Sciences; and it was only in the year 1863 that it was published in the ‘*Zeitschrift für wissenschaftliche Zoologie.*’ But however incredible the fact discovered by Wagner might appear, it had at last to be accepted when it was completely confirmed by the investigations of Meinert, Pagenstecher, Leuckart, Ganin, and Metschnikow. Nevertheless this alternation of generations among insects is regarded as an extremely rare case, although, in my opinion, we possess no satisfactory reasons for limiting it to a few insects; on the contrary, among the Diptera it appears to occur frequently, and although not in the greater number of these insects, still by no means only in a few isolated cases.

In the spring of last year (1869) I found in my aquarium a great number of ova, which afterwards proved to be those of a species of *Chironomus*, and which I employed for the investigation of the embryonic development. But when I surprised the egg-laying animal itself engaged in oviposition, I could not but subject it to a close examination, especially as it proved to be an imperfectly developed insect. I had conse-

\* Translated by W. S. Dallas, F.L.S., from the ‘*Mémoires de l'Acad. Imp. des Sciences de St. Pétersb.*’ 7<sup>e</sup> sér. tome xv.